

# Michigan Campaign Finance Complaint

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MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE  
2022 JUN 28 AM 9: 37  
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL

## Section 1. Complainant

**Name:** Matthew Ross Schonert

**Daytime Telephone Number:** +1 (231) 250-9931

**Mailing Address:** 22050 Boulder Ave, Eastpointe, MI 48021

**Email:** mrschonert@gmail.com

## Section 2. Alleged Violator

**Name:** John Braamse

**Mailing Address:** 410 N. SIXTH ST, MARQUETTE, MI 49855

**Email:** john@johnbraamse.com

## Section 3. Allegations

Sections of MCFA alleged to be violated:

**169.247**

Explain how those sections were violated:

1. John Braamse is a candidate for Michigan Senate.
2. The identifier ("paid for by" statement) on the campaign website at <https://www.johnbraamse.com> does not include the committee's address.
3. The committee's address appears nowhere on the home page, or any of the following pages: About, Contact, or News.

Committee Name: JOHN BRAAMSE FOR STATE SENATE (ID: 520622)

Evidence included with the submission of the complaint that supports the allegations:

A screenshot of the identifier which is missing the committee's address is included below.  
Retrieved on June 19, 2022.



## Section 6. Submission

This complaint is hereby submitted to:

Michigan Department of State  
Bureau of Elections  
Richard H. Austin Building – 1st Floor  
430 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48918



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

August 1, 2022

*Via Email at [john@johnbraamse.com](mailto:john@johnbraamse.com)*

Mr. John Braamse  
410 N. Sixth Street  
Marquette, MI 49855

Re: *Schonert v. Braamse*  
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022-06-30-247

Dear Mr. Braamse:

The Department of State (Department) has received a formal complaint alleging you have violated MCL 169.247 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA) by failing to include your committee's address on your website; a copy of the complaint is enclosed.

The MCFA and corresponding administrative rules require a person who produces printed or electronic material that relates to an election include the phrase "Paid for by [name and address of the person who paid for the item]." MCL 169.247(1), R 169.36(2). A knowing violation constitutes a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000.00, imprisonment for up to 93 days, or both. MCL 169.247(6).

Upon review, the evidence submitted supports the conclusion that a potential violation of the Act has occurred. From the outset, the Department must consider whether the materials fall within the ambit of the MCFA. Because the materials explicitly advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate, or for the passage or defeat of a ballot proposal, the materials contain express advocacy as defined by the Act. MCL 169.206(2)(j). As explained above, such materials must contain a "paid for by" statement listing the name and address of the committee purchasing the materials. However, the evidence shows that the materials at issue here omit part or all of that required statement. That absence supports the conclusion that a potential violation of the MCFA has occurred.

After reaching this conclusion, the Act requires the Department to "endeavor to correct the violation or prevent a further violation by using informal methods" if it finds that "there may be reason to believe that a violation ... has occurred [.]" MCL 169.215(10). The objective of an informal resolution is "to correct the violation or prevent a further violation." *Id.*

Mr. John Braamse

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Given this, the Department concludes that a formal warning is a sufficient resolution to the complaint and is hereby advising you that MCL 169.247(1) and R 169.36(2) require you to print a complete and accurate identification statement on all campaign materials, consisting of the phrase "paid for by" followed by the full name and address of your committee.

Note that all printed materials referencing you or your candidacy produced in the future must include this identification statement. For all materials currently in circulation, the paid for by statement must be corrected. If this information has been included in your materials and you wish to rebut the Department's conclusion, you must respond in writing to the Department within 15 business days of the date of this letter otherwise the Department will treat the complaint as resolved.

Please be advised that this notice has served to remind you of your obligation under the Act to identify your printed matter and may be used in future proceedings as evidence that tends to establish a knowing violation of the Act. A knowing violation is a misdemeanor offense and may merit referral to the Attorney General for enforcement action. MCL 169.247(6), 215(10).

Sincerely,

Regulatory Section  
Bureau of Elections  
Michigan Department of State

Attachment

c: Mr. Matthew Ross Schonert – Via Email at [mrschonert@gmail.com](mailto:mrschonert@gmail.com)